

MEMORANDUM FOR: All NOAA Employees

FROM: R. J. Dominic
Director, Finance Office/Comptroller

SUBJECT: Travel Advisory 02-2 (Travel Voucher/Citibank Procedures)

This Travel Advisory is issued to remind travelers and approving officials of their responsibilities to submit and approve travel vouchers timely, and to pay Citibank travel charge card accounts promptly.

Travelers are reminded to prepare their travel vouchers within 5 days of completing their trip. Approving officials are required to promptly review/approve these travel vouchers and forward a signed copy to the appropriate finance office for payment. Prompt preparation, approval, and submission of travel vouchers is particularly important for travelers who are waiting for their travel reimbursement prior to making payment to Citibank. Payment, **in full**, is due and payable to Citibank upon receipt of the Citibank statement, but must be received by Citibank no later than 25 calendar days from the statement date.

Travelers should be aware of the following guidance found in the Federal Travel Regulation (FTR), Chapter 301-52.7 : “Unless your agency administratively requires you to submit your travel claim within a shorter time frame, you must submit your travel claim as follows:

- (a) Within **5 working days** after you complete your trip or period of travel; or
- (b) Every 30 days if you are on continuous travel status.”

Supervisors, approving or reviewing travel vouchers, should be aware of the following guidance found in the FTR, Chapter 301-71.201: “The reviewing official must have full knowledge of the employee’s activities. He/she must ensure:

- (a) The claim is properly prepared in accordance with the pertinent regulations and agency procedures;
- (b) A copy of the authorization for travel is provided;
- (c) The types of expenses claimed are authorized and allowable expenses;
- (d) The amounts claimed are accurate; and
- (e) The required receipt(s), statement(s), justification(s), etc. are attached to the travel claim.”

If travel vouchers are approved and submitted in the required time frame, reimbursement will be made in time to allow travelers to repay their Citibank travel charge card accounts before they become delinquent. If an account becomes 61 days or more delinquent, the NOAA Agency Program Organization Coordinator(s) (APOCs) will send cardholders, supervisors, CFO/Management and Budget Chiefs, and Human Resource representatives, e-mail notifications. The e-mail notifications cite Department Administrative Order (DAO) 202-751 which lists corrective measures a supervisor can take for "failure to pay a just financial obligation in a proper and timely manner." The following is a list of disciplinary measures for misuse of the travel card and/or failure to pay an outstanding Citibank balance.

Failure/refusal to use card while traveling:

First - Reprimand to 10 day suspension
 Second - 5 day suspension to removal
 Third - 30 day suspension to removal

Delinquency in paying outstanding balances (60 days or more):

First - Reprimand to removal
 Second - 5 day suspension to removal
 Third - 30 day suspension to removal

Misuse:

First - 5 day suspension to removal
 Second - 30 day suspension to removal
 Third - Removal

Citibank also notifies cardholders when their account becomes delinquent. See the NOAA Travel Office web page at <http://www.rdc.noaa.gov/~finance/Citibank.htm> for a complete time line of Citibank notifications. It's important to note that Citibank can request that the Department collect from a cardholder's disposable pay any undisputed delinquent amounts owed.

Citibank travel card accounts which become 131 days delinquent will be canceled. Citibank travel card accounts can also be canceled for non-sufficient fund checks and for recurring delinquency. Any travel card account with two or more non-sufficient fund checks within a 12 month period will be canceled. Any travel card account with two or more suspensions will be canceled if a third delinquency occurs in a twelve-month period. As a general rule, canceled Citibank travel charge card accounts will not be reinstated. Citibank reviews requests for reinstatement and makes the decision based on their financial risk. If an account is canceled, travelers are expected to use personal funds for travel.

Citibank offers a new optional payment method to Government employees called "SpeedPay" which is an electronic check service that allows Citibank to accept check payments of \$25 or more from cardholders over the phone. Cardholders located within the United States can access Speedpay by calling the Customer Service telephone number 1-800-790-7206 between 7 a.m. and 11 p.m. EST, Monday through Friday. Cardholders located outside the United States can access Speedpay by calling Citibank's Customer Service Department collect at 1-904-954-7850. Cardholders using Speedpay will be charged a \$5.00 transaction fee which will be included in the amount deducted from the cardholder's checking account. Please note that the \$5.00 transaction fee **cannot be claimed** as a reimbursable travel expense on a travel voucher.

Please call Rachael Wivell or Pat Oliver in the NOAA Travel Office on (301) 413-3060 if you have any questions.